

International Review of Humanities Studies
www.irhs.ui.ac.id, e-ISSN: 2477-6866, p-ISSN: 2527-9416
Vol. 5, No.1, May 2020 (Special Issue), pp. 426-438

**INDONESIAN CULINARY:
NEGOTIATING THE VISUAL AND GUSTATORY PERCEPTION**

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ABSTRACT

As it concerns the sense of sight, visual culture puts its focus on everything of visual nature. Specific for food, visual culture has played an important role in the development of culinary culture. Corresponding to the rising of visual turn, visual perception has earned its specific role in culinary scene. Regarding this research, it is of great importance to recognise that food has both the visual and gustatory side. Visual relates to the aesthetic side, which is about its visual appearance and gustatory side is about the taste. In food industry led by the Western world with its famous chefs, visual perception is key. When food is served in high-end premises or special places for tourism purpose, visual perception is significant. For Indonesia, one of the tourist attractions is the regional food. Indonesian regional foods certainly have its own unique appearance, but are they acceptable for international culinary standard? Do Indonesian regional foods need to change their visual appearances in accordance with the requirement of the international standard? Using food images taken from the Internet, this article delves into the opposition and negotiation of visual and gustatory perception.

KEYWORDS: visual perception, hegemony, culinary, regional food

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, an archipelagic territory, is a rich country in many ways. This can be attested, among others, by the plethora of culinary recipes across the archipelago. Having as many as seventeen thousand islands is, of course, one of the easy explanations available on why this archipelagic country boasts specific culinary wealth. With so many ethnic groups, it doesn't come as a surprise for Indonesia to have such a rich culinary world. From its western end to the east end, from Aceh to Papua, each and every ethnic group has its own culinary treasure. In the last decades, traditional Indonesian culinary recipes are facing challenges in their visual appearance. Indonesian traditional food is experiencing a change due to the demand of the food industry to be able to serve the hospitality businesses that have developed greatly. Tourism world has obviously affected the Indonesian culinary in the last decades.

As we all know, like people everywhere, the Indonesian people live in big cities (urban areas) and in the villages (rural areas). Speaking about food in relation with the urban and rural dichotomy, there should be so much we can discuss based on the complexity of the culinary scene. City or urban areas and village or rural area in Indonesia have their specific food. Food developed in urban is different from that of the rural. We can differentiate between urban and rural food. We probably can say, simplistically, that the urban people are granted with the modern, international

taste. However, they also can still very much enjoy their traditional food whereas the rural people usually can only have its traditional and authentic recipes. Rural food is something more authentic and simple. This, of course, is a very simplistic way to explain the term urban and rural food.

In cities we can easily find bakeries, cafes, bistros, restaurants, coffee shops, eateries or whatever place offering international food, which are predominantly coming from western food culture and that means western perception of food. However, it is also possible, for example in Jakarta as metropolitan where people from over the globe meet, to find traditional ethnic food or regional food. As metropolitan, Jakarta is the melting pot of all backgrounds: races, cultures, and lifestyles. Consequently, this city provides all the needs of urban people, including their food. While the international food is to be consumed in international activities and relation, the ethnic or regional food is to fulfil the need of the ethnic groups from all over Indonesia residing in Jakarta to satisfy their longing for their original taste. Food in cities, which is usually far away from its origin location, has become a new identity, a new lifestyle, and a new symbol of existence.

Based on the thoughts of the social anthropologists cited in her article, Bessière (1989) attempted to understand food, and she arrived at this deduction, "Food is part of a physiological, psycho-sensorial, social and symbolic environment." Bessière's conclusion proves that food is quite complex; it relates the physiology, psychology of senses, and it is also associated with its social and symbolic meaning. Moreover, it is also about hygienic and nutritional values. The foods we eat have gone beyond nutrient but also signs and symbols. Additionally, Bessière suggested that the symbolism of food could be interpreted as symbol, a sign of communion, a class marker, and an emblem. As symbol, food like bread and wine have special symbol for the Christians. As a sign of communion means that commensality (eating together) is fundamental social link.¹ As a class marker, in everyday life people who consume champagne and caviar must come from the high class demographic. As an emblem, it is about culinary heritage of a particular community in certain geographical area. "Food is not just nutrient but also signs and symbols," many researches have agreed upon this statement. However, for Bessière (1998:23), food is more than signs and symbols. She suggested that food is not just nutrient but also signs, symbols, dreams and imagination. To further discuss food, Bessière has added two elements of food: dreams and imagination. She suggested that through eating one's beliefs and fundamental imaginary structure is revealed. Based on Fischler, Bessière (1989) concluded that the 'principle of incorporation' is an invariable element of eating behaviour. What does it mean? Such principle offers two meanings: 1) the eaters turn into what they consume, which means eating becomes an integration or adoption of the qualities of food they eat; 2) the eaters become part of a culture. In the case of Jakarta, the eaters can become part of the international lifestyle or can choose to remain their authentic identity as part of their ethnic group.

¹ As Barthes (in Bessière, 1989), food sums up and transmits a situation. It is both information and meaning. A true sign is the functional unit of a communication structure.



Picture 1-2:

French macaroons represent the beauty of colour in food as international delicacies.



Picture 3-4:

Indonesian *Jajan Pasar* is arranged beautifully to satisfy the eyes.

To have a discussion on the visual and gustatory side of food, this paper uses qualitative research method with the approach of cultural food studies and visual arts. The images of food presentation and installations are taken from and based on the Internet. This paper will start with the discussion on city and rural dichotomy, which helps to understand how food is treated in urban and rural setting. The discussion of regional and international food is also included. As the focus of this paper, there will be a discussion on the hegemony of vision in our modern (culinary) world. Other than that, there will also a discussion on how artists use food as inspiration and as the medium of their work.

The Place of Food: City and Village, Urban and Rural Dichotomy

To enter further into the debate on food and eating habits, first thing to do is that we

understand the dichotomy of city and rural areas. Why is it necessary to delve into food relating to where it is served? What food the city dwellers have and what those of the rural areas consume in their everyday life? In relation to eating, people live in the cities and those in rural areas have obviously different lifestyle. To fully understand what are urban and rural areas, we need to look into the development of urban and rural in terms of migration. About this issue, Bessière (1998) suggested that rural areas have experienced such a complex development. In relation to urban and rural, there are a number of concepts like 'peri-urbanization,' 'rurbanization,' urban de-concentration' that suggest that rural areas don't necessarily the same as the former 'peasant' society. There is significant decline in the number of farmers. Rural areas with their new characteristic have become tourist destination like the villages near the Mount Merapi in Central Java.

In Indonesian urban areas where technology is accessible, this modern development has made life much more easier in many ways, including both the preparation of food for everyday life and for special occasion. Food technology has become amazingly sophisticated that food has become so varied in taste and looks. The taste and looks that are highly appreciated are considered *high cuisine* in English or in French *haute cuisine*.² Food even is treated and appreciated similar to works of art. We are quite familiar as well with the term high arts, which is used as a general term to describe the most aesthetically pleasing and challenging arts.

In the case of eating activities, today's city dwellers are more and more indulged in so many ways. They have the taste and they have the vision right before their eyes. Beside the easy access to have meals, city dwellers can have whatever they crave immediately because all kinds of food are available. Contrastingly, people who live in rural areas do not enjoy such easy access to food. However, this condition does not necessarily make rural areas have nothing to offer. Rural areas maintain their traditional lifestyle, including their food choice. Despite all the food available day and night, they still long for their childhood food when they were still living in the villages.

Visual Hegemony in Food: the Case of Macaroons and *Jajan Pasar*

There is something interesting when we talk about these two special cakes: macaroons of the French people and *jajan pasar* of the Indonesian people (see Picture 1-2). As shown in the picture 1, 2, 3, 4, food can appear incredibly beautiful, visually lovely that certainly capture your heart. In high-end cake shops in big cities, this small and round cake originated from France (and actually Italy as well) called macaroon or also known as the French macaroon is always the centre of attention besides all the delicious cakes being displayed. With such an artistic display, this meringue-based cake unquestionably satisfies everyone's eyes. French macaroons are so pleasing for the eyes because they are visually pretty. Macaroons are usually available in so many colours and a colour represents the taste. This cake offers the ultimate taste and visual aspect. Who could

² *Haute cuisine* [ot kɥizin] is a French phrase; in English "high cooking" or *grande cuisine*. This kind of food is served in "high-level" establishments, gourmet restaurants and luxury hotels. *Haute cuisine* is characterized by careful selection of ingredients, meticulous preparation and thoughtful presentation of food. Consequently, the price is so high.

resist such edible object? Macaroons have become the icon of the high-end cake and they represent the food of the modern times. What makes this small round cake so famous? If we look more in the inside of a cake shop, we would find beautiful cakes, not only beautiful but yummy as well. Food industry has become such huge industry involving so many people in it. Macaroons represent two complementary sides of food: visual and gustatory sides. Macaroons are beautiful and delicious. The fact that they don't come cheap is not a problem. This particular cake has special history relating to French queen Catherine de Medici whose pastry chef created for his queen during the Renaissance. Excluding its special history, macaroons don't come cheap because obviously the ingredients are quite pricey.

After looking back on the French macaroons, we should return to our authentic snack, the Javanese snacks, called *jajan pasar* 'market munchies'. These snacks are usually sold in traditional markets. *Jajan pasar* is assorted colourful Indonesian traditional cakes served during festivities. The delicacies include so many snacks such as *dadar gulung*, *kue lapis*, *bika ambon*, *kue talam*, *nagasari*, *kue mangkok*, *kue ku*, *kue bugis*, *kue cucur*, *getuk lindri*, *bolu kukus*, *putu mayang*, *kue soes*³. *Jajan pasar* can include as many snacks as possible. These delicacies come in bright colours but they are just about colours, the taste is undoubtedly delicious for the tongue of the Indonesian people. These colourful snacks have earned their position in the culinary world in Indonesia. These snacks have become snacks of choice for special occasions held in urban areas. Do these snacks deserve to have such high appreciation? Is it because of they are visually pleasing? We are going to discuss about these issues in this piece of writing.

Regional Versus International Food: Taste Versus Vision

Regional food (Ayora-Diaz, 2012:57) has its own characteristics in terms of visual and gustatory perception. Indonesian regional food is special because it is incredibly varied. This, of course, is the consequence of so many ethnic groups in Indonesia with their own way of cooking resulting in so many different kinds of food. The regional food found in Greater Jakarta represents the ethnic groups coming from all over Indonesia to find works in the capital city of Indonesia. There are a number of regional foods we can enjoy in Jakarta and the surrounding areas like Bekasi, Depok and Tangerang. One regional food that is so familiar across Indonesia is the Padang food, which includes the super dish called *rendang*. At international level, in 2011, *rendang* (made of beef with special ingredients and long hour cooking) was even named as one of the World's 50 Best Foods by CNN. In the northern part of Sumatra, the Aceh people boast their Mie Aceh (Aceh noodle). At least for the last decade, Aceh food has entered into the scene of regional food to be enjoyed by everyone in Jakarta and the surrounding areas. Apart from the Aceh dish, the city dwellers can also enjoy other regional food like Sundanese and Javanese food, Banjar food in Kalimantan, Balinese food, Bugis-Makassar food, Manadonese food, Ambonese and Papuan food to mention almost all the region in Indonesia.

In big cities many high-end bakeries and restaurants are the places where people can experience the visual and gustatory perception of the international food. International food can include many kind of food originating from different continents and countries. Europe: French

³ All these delicacies are usually traditional, but some cake like *kue soes* is actually a French snack.

food, Italian Food, Greek food. Asia: Japanese food, Korean food or Indian food. Concerning Chinese food, there is something interesting to talk about. Chinese is a special case. The Indonesian people living in the cities are quite familiar with Chinese food. In big cities they have enjoyed Chinese food for a very long time. One thing that has to be recognized is the Chinese people have brought along with them their food culture and has influenced the Indonesian food in so many ways.

On regional and international food, there are some interesting aspects we should further scrutinize. Firstly, the presentation of the regional and international food is different. The regional food usually focuses on the authenticity and original taste so they ignore the aesthetic side of presenting dishes on the plate. The plating is not being considered as an important part of the dish.

However, there has been different trend found in Central Java. In Yogyakarta, the affected areas of the eruption of Mount Merapi, new restaurants have been built to cater tourists who want to see the Mount Merapi after the eruption. The new restaurants choose to use their own vision of food. Many new restaurants around the affected areas of the Merapi eruption emerge with their own original Javanese style. Fully aware they go back to their roots, which is the Javanese roots. Javanese food is offered in far from fancy restaurants. They use original cooking of the Javanese. All are originals: the kitchen, the food, the tables and chairs are not of international standard. This new trend in affected areas of Mount Merapi eruption has attracted tourists, both local and foreign, to experience local style cooking using local methods. They cook rice in a traditional way to have different flavour. Here we don't see any effort to present food in an international standard. These local entrepreneurs present their authentic food in such a natural way.

Food Presentation and Visual Perception

To begin with this discussion, with regard to the visual aspect of food, it might as well be useful to bring up these two concepts: visual culture and visual turn. We understand that visual turn is the shift emphasizing toward the importance of what we see (the visible). Visual turn as part of the discussion of visual culture has contributed to the development of food appearance. Picture of beautiful food in the form of photos, in television, in film,

Food is in essence about how it tastes. However, the visual culture had made it a different thing. As we have discussed above, food is not just nutrient that is served without any artistic consideration closely related to arts, it is now something that should be visually beautiful. Apart from the fact that the ingredients should be of the best quality, food needs to be meticulously planned using imagination. The plating of dish using fish, meat or vegetables is not as easy as it looks. To achieve such skill the cook or chef needs to go through years of training or attending courses or culinary school.



Picture 5-6:

These two images represent the haute cuisine served in high-end French restaurant.

This exemplary haute cuisine is so much about the visual hegemony. The sense of sight is so indulged.

DISCUSSION^[1]_{SEP}

In the light of philosophy, Perullo (2018:175) suggested that a paradox takes place when we talk about our sensory system. Treated as a ‘minor sense’ in the sensory hierarchy, taste is celebrated and ‘culturalised’ through vision, which is the supreme sense. The visual side of food is placed atop the gustatory side. That is to say that hegemony of visual also works on food as something relating to taste. This clearly explains that, in visual culture, visual perception is more important than the gustatory perception. Taste is supposedly important only when it becomes ‘something’ we can analyse and objectivise (Perullo, 2018:176). This coincides with the birth of aesthetics in 18th century. At this time subjectivity and judgment went along with the new sensibility of artworks and that includes gustatory artefacts. About this paradox, Perullo explained that this process to the visualisation of taste was born and developed in the context of scientific and philosophical revolutions of modernity. In short, this process has not long been acknowledged.

Visual versus Gustatory Perception

This article wishes to look into how visual perception becomes more important than the gustatory perception. First of all, we are going to try to understand the term ‘visual hegemony or hegemony of vision.’ This interesting term is found in a book edited by David Michael Levin (1993), *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*. The chapters in this book explore the question of whether Western thought and culture have been dominated by a vision-centred paradigm of knowledge, ethics, and power. One of the chapters mentions the term of hegemony of vision, which can help explain why visual perception becomes so important in modern life. The issues discussed

in this book to some extent have something to do with the issues discussed in this article: the hegemony of vision. The assumption that Western thought and culture is dominated by vision-centred paradigm is probably supporting the fact that visual perception is more central than the gustatory perception. Urban French cuisine made by Michelin star restaurants owned by celebrated chefs is all about visual perception. Each and every chef has a responsibility to serve a dish, which must appear beautiful with composition and colours seriously considered. The plating of a dish is key. A dish is treated in such depth as the artists treat their artworks. In hospitality businesses like hotels and restaurants, chefs have become artists and celebrities.

The relation between visual and gustatory perception has gone to the next level when in the 20th century photography, cinema and digital revolution are invented (Perullo, 2018:176). It is quite obvious that these inventions have contributed to the status of food. Food is not just a plain nutrient necessary for the body; it has become an object of artistic value. To sum up, food has earned a new position due to the development of visual related technology.

Some Issues on Visual and Gustatory Perception in Indonesian Food

Above we have discussed the issues of visual vis-à-vis gustatory perception. From the discussion above there are a number of issues to be further discussed. Firstly, food has its visual side and gustatory side. The visual side of food is important when we talk about the food provided in big cities for the international urban people. Wealthy urban people are indulged with so many food and beverages that are served so beautifully with international taste like we always found in five star hotels and restaurants. Secondly, from the gustatory side, regional food receives different reactions. In urban areas where people are far from their origins, regional food has its own place and appreciation. Here the visual side of food doesn't matter anymore. In Greater Jakarta, we can always find regional food that has nothing to do with the hegemony of vision. The regional food doesn't have to be beautiful or visually pleasing. The important thing is the taste, the authentic taste that is recorded in the memory. A wealthy person originating from certain part of Indonesia, for example, still yearns for his/her childhood food. Being part of the international lifestyle, this person still has his/her original self that love to eat his/her regional food.

From the above discussion on the vision and taste of regional food, we can conclude that the opposition of urban and regional food, international and local taste, visual and gustatory perception is very vulnerable when it comes to people. The fact that people living in urban areas actually come from various places, backgrounds with their own history needs to be taken into account when it comes to food.

Indonesian food with so many regional tastes in it is quite challenging. Indonesian food has its own place in the international scene. So the question of Indonesian haut cuisine should be treated and discussed in a special way. Regional food in Indonesia is the representation of Indonesia as a unique country. So, there has to be a serious discussion about this involving all the stakeholders in this field.

Question of Indonesian Haute Cuisine and Visual Perception



Picture 7-8:

These two dishes are the favourite dishes of the Batak and Minahasa ethnic group. It's quite obvious that these dishes don't consider visual perception as important for food. When it comes to regional food, the taste is always the winner.

In the above picture (Picture 5-6) we have two dishes of Saksang and Tinorangsak. *Saksang* is an authentic dish of the Batak ethnic group and the Minahasan people has this special dish called *tinorangsak*. These two dishes are examples of regional food that can be found in urban Jakarta but they are absolutely not acceptable as high cuisine. These two dishes are about the authentic taste of the people who own them. In this particular case visual hegemony is not the winner. Is that the reason why the Indonesian food cannot become *haute cuisine*?

Talking about the Indonesian haute cuisine, we can look way back at the time of early Indonesian Independence. Indonesian high quality food had already been an issue. The question most asked, "Is there haute cuisine of Indonesia?" In a mockery tone, a certain Indo-Dutch named James Schuurmans asked this question to the gastronomes of Indonesia (Rahman, 2016: 3-4). What is haute cuisine? What does it mean? Haute cuisine is a French word for top-grade cooking. Long after that particular question was asked, in 1995 Onghokham (historian), Umar Kayam (sociologist cum writer) and Iwan Tirta (fashion designer) wrote in *Selera* magazine. They all wrote for the question "Is Indonesia's haute cuisine necessary?" According to Rahman (2016:5), what they all had written could be used to respond Schuurmans' question above. According to these three leading Indonesians, the added value of the Indonesian cuisine is more on the ingredients and the flavour or the tastes. Obviously, it is not on the way it looks. Indonesian food is about flavour, it is about taste; it is all about the gustatory side. As concluded by Rahman (2016:5), to be able to develop the national cuisine first to allow us to take the Indonesian national dish to international level and become haute cuisine. Although *rendang* is recognized as one of the tastiest dishes, it is still hard to imagine how this dish originating from Minangkabau is going to be presented to qualify as haute cuisine.

Indonesian Cuisine and Hospitality Businesses

If Indonesian *haute cuisine* does not and cannot exist, so what is the position of Indonesian food facing the tourism field or the hospitality business? Indonesian *haute cuisine* might not exist but the ingredients and taste are guaranteed to be unique and special. As discussed in the beginning of this article, Indonesia as archipelagic country boasts so many ethnic groups with their unique food, which represents what the nature has granted. They have their own unique way of introducing their food like we find in the affected areas of Mount Merapi. Natural cooking in a makeshift kitchen has become the focus of attraction. They are far from fancy, far from the requirements controlled by the international standard but people have shown their appreciation to this local cooking and eating way. The restaurants have become new interesting attractions for tourists. Before or after the tourists have their sightseeing session of the volcano using quite old open jeep, they end up enjoying the local food, local cooking in the original environment.

The situation described above, tourism in rural areas, might relate to the term myth of nature (Bessière, 1989:22). This term is about the mental perception of the countryside. We agree that the urban people have a kind of life that is so monotonous, without variations. Urban life is all about work and ambition to get to the better life economically. We all are aware that these urban people actually come from villages so they might still have certain memory about their origin. Tourism can use this mental perception of the countryside to innovate and create rural areas as interesting tourist destinations. This is not just for local tourists but international tourists as well. Villages can be a good place for the urban people to have a break from their monotonous life and it can also be a pleasure for the international tourists.

One of the elements associating with the myth of nature is the regional food. Concerning local tourism, regional food opens doors to improve the culinary local business and for international tourists regional food could serve as an amazing attraction. By doing so, hospitality business can make food-related innovations to be able to cater the demand of the local and international tourists. Definitely, the tourism or hospitality businesses are always in need of innovations to keep increasing the number of tourists. Gastronomic innovations take place. In the case of food numerous things can be done to attract more people to come. By doing gastronomic innovations the food will be presented in new way in terms of flavours, aromas, colours and textures and, of course, presentation. Understanding the concept of visual and gustatory perception will help the food industry to make innovations. These gastronomic innovations are necessary to ensure that foods that are served are always fresh visually and gastronomically. The correspondence between visual and gustatory perception should be taken into consideration when we are to produce the best foods for tourists.

International standard food has always been the standard of the hospitality industry. Wherever the high-end restaurants or hotels are operating, they must follow the rules in hospitality business. The food should be artistically presented and should use the best ingredients. If the target is to include Indonesian food in international food scene, then what measures that the Indonesian hospitality industries have to take? To answer such question, it is probably important to look at food in its relation to arts, or visual arts to be precise. To talk about this, we are actually discussing food and its relation to arts.

Visual perception is closely related to the appreciation of art works. Art works requires

visual ability and competence to allow the audiences to be able show their appreciation. Though the position of food presentation as work of art remains disputable, many artists have created food installation art using food as the media. Based on a gastronomic installation of Rirkrit Tiravanija, who manipulated food as a medium between art and cuisine (Bröcker, 2017), we can further the discussion of food relating to visual art and culinary art. The work of Rirkrit Tiravanija is a site-specific installation that is not stand-alone piece. This installation actually points to another project of utopian potential. Part of the installation, the artists participated in this art work, built simple huts offering the interested parties a place to make distance with the art world. In this installation, the food itself is a central element. It's central not just for the people who pass by, but specifically food serves as a symbolic gesture to welcome visitors. As the artist is a Thai-descent, he offered Thai dishes using basic recipes for Pad Thai or Thai curries.

Visual Arts and Cuisine

As many aspects of human life, food invites artists and/or chefs to be creative and innovative. Many of us have read somewhere about food art or culinary art. Food art or culinary art is the art of preparing, cooking and presenting food in the most creative ways. The idea of food art probably popped up due to the amalgamation of varied food cultures making way for creative uses of different ingredients and foods. Food arts must have something to do with the visual perception. In relation with arts *haute cuisine* includes arts to produce it. Cooking is about the art of preparing, cooking and presenting food. Preparing *haute cuisine* means choosing the best ingredients; cooking *haute cuisine* means using the best method to create excellent flavour, to have great aroma and to find sophisticated texture; and presenting *haute cuisine* means to make the food looks beautiful visually as artists take into account composition and colours.

As already discussed above, *haute cuisine* is not just about excellent taste, but also a matter of vision. In an article titled “Inventions and the Aesthetics of Regional Food: the Naturalization of Yucatean Taste”, Ayora-Diaz delved into a special regional food from the perspective of aesthetics in the case of the Yucatean taste. The term ‘taste’, which is originally coined to make reference of flavours, has developed an array of meanings. This term has become a metaphor for social relations and marker of social distance and distinction (Ayora-Diaz, 2012:58). Philosophers and other scholars have established a hierarchy of the senses. The senses of sight and hearing are ranked higher and objective whereas the senses of taste and touch are ranked low due to their subjective, sensual and primitive nature.

Furthermore, based on what have been suggested by Ferguson, 2011; Gronow, 1997; Korsmeyer, 1999; and Sutton (2010) on senses, Ayora-Diaz (2012:58) came to this following statement:

“Through time, philosophers and other scholars have established a hierarchy of the senses that ranks as higher and objective that act through distance (sight and hearing), those that depend on proximity (taste and touch) are ranked low because of their subjective, sensual and primitive nature. It is this elevation of sight and hearing, which has supported the classification of painting, sculpture, and music as high arts, whereas cooking and food are not granted such recognition.”

This statement reveals the position of cooking and food as senses of taste and touch that is lower than that of the senses of sight and hearing, which support painting, sculpture and music as high arts. When visual culture dominates our modern world, cooking and food have the chance to be recognized as art when these two activities are related to the visual perception and the phenomenon of hegemony of vision. The hegemony of visual perception has contributed to the position of food to be recognized as something equal to work of arts.

CONCLUSION

Having all the discussions above, some important points can be concluded here. From visual and gustatory perception, food cannot be taken for granted. As have been scrutinized by many researchers around the world, food is beyond a mere nutrient, food explains and reveals so many aspects in people's life. The philosophers, the social and political thinkers, the business people, they all have shown great interest in food. Secondly, food relates to various fields. In its relation to the hospitality businesses, the concept of visual and gustatory perception is worthwhile to be considered to develop regional food so that it would be acceptable for everyone: the local and international tongue.

We have various kinds of food according to its classification. Based on geography, we have regional food like mentioned and showed above in picture 7-8. Those two dishes represent the food of the ethnic groups in Indonesia. When discussing about Indonesian regional food, sensibly the Indonesian should have its national food. But, the case of Indonesian food – national or regional – is not as simple as that. What food should become Indonesian food? Indonesia has so many regional foods, but can we refer to those ethnic groups' food as our national food? The problem of national food needs to be further discussed in other research.

Food reveals many aspects of human life. As the food anthropologists have stated, food is a symbol, food is a sign of communion, food is a class marker, and food is an emblem. Understanding what food represents will certainly help food industry and hospitality businesses in Indonesia to put food in its best place relating to social, cultural, economic and political life. By doing so, Indonesian food or regional food will be developed using its authentic perception of food. Despite the fact that the term authentic remains arguable, the value of authenticity is usually what the tourists look for.

Food and arts are two study fields that mutually inspire. Some people believe that food is also arts. The artists and/or chefs who have worked with food as the medium have shown how food is closely related to arts. Food is art in many aspects. Food presentation needs creativity and aesthetic innovations to keep food interesting for people at large. Food presentation should become one of the serious problems when it comes to regional food. Regional food usually doesn't consider the visual aspect of food; food is about taste, original taste. However, when regional food will be offered for international tourists, it should be served as something that is visually pleasing. The dishes considered as *haute cuisine* come from the creativity of the chefs. They continue to work as artists working with ingredients and methods of cooking. On the contrary, the artists use food as medium for their work of arts.

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